

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

COMMITTEE ON
FOREIGN RELATIONS

COMMITTEE ON
THE BUDGET

COMMITTEE ON
HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4607

August 8, 2020

Dear Friends,

I commend the City of Alexandria for your impressive efforts to acknowledge the dark history of lynching and to memorialize the victims, Benjamin Thomas and Joseph McCoy, of Alexandria's past. We must continually come to terms with the failures of our communities and nation, in order to work for a better and more equitable future.

In June of 2005, the Senate passed a resolution that apologized to the victims of lynching and their descendants for its failure to enact anti-lynching legislation. Although the federal government has not passed a bill against lynching, various states, including Virginia, passed laws to increase the punishment for these heinous crimes. In the Senate, I was proud to cosponsor and support the passage of the Justice for Victims of Lynching Act of 2019, which would make lynching a federal hate crime for the first time in American history. This landmark bill is also incorporated into the Justice in Policing Act of 2020, the first comprehensive legislative approach to ending police brutality and changing the culture of law enforcement departments by holding police accountable in court for misconduct, increasing transparency through better data collection, and improving police practices and training.

We must continue this work. The stained legacy of this egregious period in American history must never repeat itself, and perpetrators of these crimes should face stiff penalties. Your commitment to the accurate dissemination of history, no matter how horrific, is crucial to this effort. I am proud to serve as your senator and do this work with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'TK / C', is written over a faint, larger blue ink signature that appears to read 'Tim Kaine'.

Tim Kaine